

## Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

DODE-00 EB-07 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 MC-02

ACDA-05 TRSE-00 /076 W  
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R 200805Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7970

INFO AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0272

CASABLANCA FOR RCAA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, EAIR, MILL, MA, US

SUBJ: POSSIBLE SALE OF SIKORSKY S-58T HELICOPTERS TO MADAGASCAR

REF: (A) STATE 30460 (NOTAL) (B) TANANARIVE 0023 (NOTAL)

1. DURING RECENT VISIT OF SIKORSKY REPRESENTATIVE ENGELHARDT TO TANANARIVE (REF A), HE INFORMED EMBASSY THAT MALAGASY OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED STRONG INTEREST IN PURCHASE OF THREE SIKORSKY S-58T HELICOPTERS FOR GENERAL UTILITY USE. ACCORDING TO ENGELHARDT, THE MALAGASY TOLD HIM THEY HAVE MADE A DEFINITE DECISION TO BUY THREE MACHINES, AND NOW MUST DECIDE BETWEEN SIKORSKY OFFER, PRESENTED BY ENGELHARDT, AND SOVIET OFFER TO SUPPLY MI-8 HELICOPTERS. APPARENTLY A FRENCH OFFER WAS ALSO SOLICITED, BUT THE COST TURNED OUT TO BE SO HIGH THE MALAGASY HAVE RULED IT OUT. SIKORSKY OFFER IS APPROXIMATELY \$4.0 MILLION FOR THREE MACHINES TOGETHER WITH SPARE PARTS AND TRAINING. TERMS OF SOVIET PROPOSAL UNKNOWN.

2. ENGELHARDT FURTHER REPORTED THAT S-58T'S, CAPABLE OF CARRYING UP TO 16 PERSONS, WOULD BE DESIGNED FOR CIVILIAN USE:

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DISASTER RELIEF, MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN OUTLYING AREAS, FIRE FIGHTING, CHASING CATTLE RUSTLERS, VIP TRANSPORT,

AND THE LIKE. THEY WOULD NOT BE SUPPLIED WITH ANY MILITARY CONFIGURATIONS OR EQUIPMENT. MALAGASY WOULD BUY OPTIONAL FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT.

3. FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK REPRESENTATIVE FROM NAIROBI WHO ACCOMPANIED ENGELHARDT ON VISIT TO MADAGASCAR INDICATED CITIBANK WOULD BE PREPARED TO ASSIST FINANCING, HOPEFULLY WITH EXIM-BANK PARTICIPATION, IF SALE MATERIALIZES.

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF CESSNA AIRCRAFT RECENTLY INFORMED EMBASSY GDRM HAS DECIDED TO DEFER POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF CESSNA JET TRAINER AND ATTACK AIRCRAFT THIS YEAR (REF B). CESSNA REP SAID THAT ACCORDING TO MALAGASY AIR CORPS OFFICER GDRM HAS DECIDED TO GIVE FIRST PRIORITY TO PURCHASE OF HELICOPTERS, AND SECOND PRIORITY TO PURCHASE OF TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, POSSIBLE LOCKHEED C-130'S.

5. COMMENT: DESPITE PROBLEMS IN U.S.-MALAGASY BILATERAL RELATIONS, EMBASSY HOPES DEPARTMENT, AND EXIMBANK IF ASKED, WILL KEEP OPEN MIND ON THE QUESTION OF SALE OF SIKORSKYS TO MADAGASCAR, IF THE GDRM SHOULD DECIDE TO GO AHEAD WITH PURCHASE. NOT ONLY WOULD CONTRACT INVOLVE A SUBSTANTIAL COMMERCIAL EXPORT SALE FOR THE U.S., IT WOULD SEEM TO BE IN OUR INTEREST TO PLACE U.S. RATHER THAN SOVIET EQUIPMENT WITH THE STILL PRO-WESTERN MALAGASY AIR CORPS AND HEAD OFF FURTHER EXPANSION OF SOVIET PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE HERE.SHEINBAUM

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